

PROCEEDINGS OF LEARNED SOCIETIES.

ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

June 23, 1857.—Dr. Gray, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

DESCRIPTION OF NEW GENERA OF GORGONIAE. By DR. JOHN EDWARD GRAY, F.R.S., F.L.S., V.P. Z. & ENT. SOC.

1. SARCOGORGIA.

The coral rather irregularly furcately branched on a single plane. The axis black, cylindrical, thick at the base, with slender flexible branchlets. The bark fleshy; in the dry state, thin, like a continuous skin, smooth, without spicula, with rather close, more or less raised cells, strengthened with a quantity of sand-like, granular spicula.

This genus is at once distinguished from all the other *Gorgoniae* that I have seen, by its thin, smooth, skin-like bark studded with sandy, more or less raised, wart-like cells, which on the thick stem are numerous all round the surface, scarcely raised, while on the thinner branchlets they are further apart, and form prominent wart-like cells.

The axis is olive-brown, formed of concentric laminæ, which often show a space between them at the fractures. When the bark is soaked in potash it is rather thick and flesh-like, and the cells are surrounded with a single series of rather regularly disposed, nearly equal-sized, angular, sand-like, transparent particles, forming a sheath to the polype.

The tentacles of the polypes, when examined in this state, are thick, conical, and simple, without any indication of the pinnate tubercles which are to be seen in the living *Gorgonia*, according to the observations of most naturalists.

I know of only a single species of the genus, which was purchased of a dealer in natural history at Liverpool, without any habitat.

SARCOGORGIA PHIDIPPUS.

2. SUBERGORGIA.

Coral furcately branched, rather compressed, with a continued sunken groove up the middle of each side. Cells rather prominent, convex, in two or three somewhat irregular series up each edge. Axis pale brown, wart-like, formed of rather loosely concentric fibrous laminæ, containing a large quantity of calcareous matter, and effervescing with muriatic acid. The bark when dry is rather thin, smooth, hard and granular within.

SUBERGORGIA SUBEROSA.

Gorgonia suberosa, Esper. t. 49.

This genus, and the genera *Junceella*, *Ctenocella*, and *Gorgonella*

of Valenciennes, should be arranged with *Corallium* under the family *Coralliidae*, characterized by having a calcareous axis.

DESCRIPTION OF A RABBIT SAID TO BE FOUND ON THE HIMALAYAN MOUNTAINS. BY A. D. BARTLET.

This animal is smaller than the domestic Rabbit, being shorter and more compact; its body is pure white, the nose, ears, legs and tail are of a dark brownish-black, the eyes dark red.

The fur is much shorter and more nearly equal in length than in the common Rabbit. The young are perfectly white all over until they are five or six weeks old, at which time the nose and tail begin to get dark-coloured; the feet soon afterwards get dark, and lastly the ears turn black.

In their movements they appear quicker than other rabbits, and they jump a considerable distance; some in my possession I have seen leap upon objects 3 feet from the ground. The first specimens of these animals that came under my notice were obtained by Mr. Baker, who informed me that they came from the Himalayas. I have since seen a large number of them, and in no instance have I observed any variation in the colour or markings. They are prolific breeders, and appear extremely hardy.

Having some recollection of hearing a furrier once speak of the skins of the Polish Rabbit, I took an opportunity a few days since to examine a large quantity of these skins at a fur warehouse, when I found that they were beyond all doubt from the animal now under notice. Upon inquiry I was told that these skins are imported into this country in large numbers, and extensively used as a substitute for ermine, which fur they much resemble. I find in Mulsant, 'Cours Élémentaire d'Histoire Naturelle,' the following:—"The fur of the White Rabbit, even that of the Polish Rabbit, is easily distinguished from that of the ermine, by its less cylindrical hairs, which are considerably longer than the down." I am also informed that they are bought at the great sale of furs that takes place annually at Leipsic; to this great fair, skins are brought from all parts of the world, and I think it highly probable that these skins are imported from the mountainous parts of Asia.

I have not at present examined the skull of this animal, but should I find sufficient difference upon comparing it with the skulls of the other known species, I shall then propose for it the name of *Lepus nigripes*, or Black-footed Rabbit.

July 14, 1857.—Dr. Gray, F.R.S., V.P., in the Chair.

Mr. Gould having returned from a visit to the United States, whither he had proceeded for the purpose of studying the habits and manners of the species of *Trochilus* frequenting that portion of the American continent, detailed some of the results of his observations.

Having arrived just prior to the period of the bird's migration from Mexico to the north, and having had ample opportunities for

observing it in a state of nature, he noticed that its actions were very peculiar, and quite different from those of all other birds: the flight is performed with a motion of the wings so rapid as to be almost imperceptible; indeed the muscular power of this little creature appears to be very great in every respect, as, independently of its rapid and sustained flight, it grasps the small twigs, flowers, &c. upon which it alights with great firmness, and if wounded clings to them with the utmost tenacity: it appears to be most active in the morning and evening, and to pass the middle of the day under the shade of the thick leafy branches. Occasionally it occurs in such numbers, that fifty or sixty may be seen on a single tree. When captured, it so speedily becomes tame, that it will feed from the hand or mouth within half an hour. Successful in keeping one alive during a long railway journey, in a gauze bag attached to his breast-button, for three days, during which it readily fed from a small bottle filled with a syrup of brown sugar and water, Mr. Gould determined to attempt the bringing of some living examples to England, in which he succeeded, but unhappily they did not long survive their arrival in London, and died on the second day: had they lived, it was his intention to have sent them to the Society's Gardens, where they would doubtless have been objects of great attraction. Mr. Gould added, that he was certain that they might be readily brought to this country; that they would live in the gardens at least during the months of summer, and that the captains of any of the great steamers now voyaging between England and America would willingly render the assistance requisite to effect this desirable object.

Mr. Gould exhibited a highly interesting species of *Ceriornis*, which he had found in the Collection of Dr. Cabot of Boston, who, with the greatest liberality, permitted him to bring it to England for the purpose of comparison and description. The appearance of this bird is very singular, and the uniform buff colouring of the breast would lead to the supposition that it is merely a variety of one or other of the previously known species of the genus; but the greater length of the tarsi, and the well-defined markings of the back, forbid such a conclusion. For this new bird, forming the fourth species of the genus, Mr. Gould proposed the name of

CERIORNIS CABOTI.

Forehead, sides of the head, nape and chin, black; crest and sides of the neck deep red; all the upper surface mottled with black, rich chestnut, and buffy white, the latter colour assuming the form of a large circular spot at the tip of each feather; this buff mark greatly increasing in size on the scapularies and the greater wing- and tail-coverts; primaries and tail-feathers very dark brown, crossed with toothed markings of buff mottled with black; breast and under surface deep sandy buff stained with red, and black on the flanks, under tail-coverts and thighs.

Total length, $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches; bill, $1\frac{3}{8}$; wing, 10; tail, $7\frac{1}{4}$; tarsi, $3\frac{1}{2}$; middle toe and nail, $2\frac{3}{4}$.

Hab. China.

Remark.—This species is more nearly allied to *C. Temmincki* than to the other members of the genus. The specimen is believed to be unique.

July 28, 1857.—Professor Busk, F.R.S., in the Chair.

DESCRIPTIONS OF SEVEN NEW SHELLS FROM THE COLLECTION OF THE HON. SIR DAVID BARCLAY, OF PORT LOUIS, MAURITIUS. BY LOVELL REEVE, F.L.S., F.G.S.

Sir David Barclay, a gentleman resident at the Mauritius, and long known to conchologists as a zealous collector of shells, having availed himself of the occasion of visiting this country to bring a few of the rarer specimens of his cabinet for comparison, I have, at his request, examined them, and selected the following as being new :—

1. *STROMBUS TAURUS.* *Strom. testa ovata, crassissima, ponderosa; spira exserta, nodoso-tuberculata; anfractibus transversim striatis et tenuiliratis, ultimo superne obtuse angulato et perampliter bi-tri-tuberculato, tuberculo obliquo peramplio infra in medio ornato; columella densissime callosa, superne fere ad apicem appresse dilatata; apertura subcontracta, labro dense incrassato, tuberculis peramplis obtusis armato superne bidactylo, dactylo supremo elongato, curvato; albida, aurantio-fusco variegata et sparsim vittata, columella et apertura fauce rubido-carneo tinctis.*

Long. $3\frac{1}{2}$ poll., lat. $2\frac{5}{8}$ poll.

Hab. Amirante Islands, a group of the Seychelles.

This remarkable shell, which Sir David Barclay has for some time past known as an undescribed species, and distinguished in his cabinet by the above name, is curiously intermediate in its generic characters between *Strombus* and *Pterocera*. In detail of pattern and sculpture it resembles *S. laciniatus*, but there is a large central oblique tubercle on the back, and the lip is thickened into two very large obtuse oblong tubercles, the upper part being produced into two decided *Pterocera* claws, one of which is prolonged in a curved manner to the extent of an inch and a half. The specimen has rather the appearance of being malformed; but notwithstanding this seeming irregularity of growth, there is no doubt whatever of its being specifically distinct from any hitherto described form.

2. *CYPRÆA BARCLAYI.* *Cypr. testa pyriformi-ovata, subumbilicata; dorso elevatiusculo, extremitatibus eleganter calloso-productis, subrostratis; basi convexa; dentibus utrinque octo-decim ad novemdecim fortibus tumidiusculis; interstitiis conspicue sulcatis, profundis; dentibus exterioribus super labrum decurrentibus, medianis bifidis; nitente, alba, dorso aurantio-spadiceo undique eximie punctato et lentiginoso, extremitatibus aurantio-spadiceo tinctis.*

Long. 1 poll., lat. $\frac{5}{8}$ poll.

Hab. Island of Diego Garcia, a dependency of Mauritius (taken on a block of coral dredged up from deep water).

An exquisitely delicate species in the finest possible condition, perfectly unlike any of this favourite genus hitherto known. It is of an elegantly pyriform shape, with the extremities rather produced; the teeth on each side the aperture being especially characteristic, from their strong development and deeply grooved interstices. The painting is a delicate profusion of orange-buff dots of different degrees of tone upon a shining pearl-white ground; the extremities and teeth, the outer of which extend nearly across the base, being tinged with the orange-buff in a darker and brighter hue.

3. *PYRULA (RHIZOCHILUS) DE BURGHIAE*. *Pyr. testa pyriformi-ovata, subanguste umbilicata; spira breviuscula, turrita; anfractibus superne late angulato-expansis, ad angulum squamis subamplis plano-compressis flabellatim coronatis, infra basin versus attenuatis, undique dense liratis, liris subtilissime serratis; alba, apertura fauce sulcata.*

Long. $1\frac{3}{8}$ poll., lat. $1\frac{1}{4}$ poll.

Hab. China.

A beautifully turbinated pagoda-like shell, being coronated throughout the expanded angle of the whorls with large compressed fan-shaped scales. It is of the same peculiar typical form as the *Pyrula Mawæ*, the umbilicus being, however, much more contracted, and is believed to be an inhabitant of the same locality.

I have the pleasure of naming this very delicate and remarkable species in honour of Mrs. De Burgh, a lady, whose warm assiduity and zeal in collecting shells is equalled by her intelligent apprehension of their characters and correct estimation of their comparative rarity and beauty.

4. *TROCHUS (EUCHELE) ALABASTRUM*. *Tro. testa subdepresso-conoidea, anguste profunde umbilicata; spira exserta; sutura peculiariter profunde excavata; anfractibus deinde concavis, et fortiter tricarinatis, carinis subirregulariter undatis et exquisite serratis; calcareo-alba, carinis punctis nigris subdistantibus peculiariter notatis.*

Long. $\frac{5}{8}$ poll., lat. $\frac{5}{8}$ poll.

Hab. Island of Diego Garcia, a dependency of the Mauritius.

Of this very striking species there is a second specimen in the collection of Mr. Cuming. It is of a pure chalk-white substance, strongly spirally grooved and keeled throughout, the keels being sparsely dotted with black.

5. *MUREX BARCLAYI*. *Mur. testa trigono-ovata, canali breviuscula, recurva; spira brevi, acuminata; anfractibus transversim tenuissime serrato-liratis et striatis, longitudinaliter tri-varicosis, varicibus basin versus conspicue fimbriato-laminatis, interstitiis triseriatis tuberculatis et nodatis; rosaceo-alba, purpurascente et ferrugineo-carneo tincta et maculata.*

Long. $3\frac{1}{4}$ poll., lat. $1\frac{3}{4}$ poll.

Hab. St. Brandon Shoal, near Mauritius (thrown on shore after a hurricane).

This very beautiful species is very closely allied to a shell in Mr. Cuming's collection, which has been attributed by Mr. Sowerby, in his 'Conchological Illustrations,' to *M. trigonulus*, Lamarck. It is also as closely allied to a shell in the collection of the King of Denmark, which was figured for that species by myself in the 'Conchologia Iconica.' From both, however, it is sufficiently distinct to establish its claim to rank as a new species.

6. *CYCLOSTOMA TUBULUM*. *Cycl. testa imperforata, turbinata; spira elevatiuscula; anfractibus rotundatis, lævibus; apertura circulari; labro eleganter expanso; lutescente-alba, nigricantifusco multifasciata.*

Lat. $1\frac{1}{8}$ poll.

Hab. —?

This very elegant species partakes of the characters of *C. Belairi* and *Boivini*, but is quite distinct from either of those species. There is no umbilicus and very little umbilical callosity. The bands are peculiar in extending over the expanded lip to the extreme edge.

7. *CYCLOSTOMA EUGENIÆ*. *Cycl. testa subprofunde umbilicata, subdepresso-orbiculari; spira brevi; anfractibus ad suturam leviter impressis, deinde convexis, spiraliter dense elevato-striatis, in medio acute tenuicarinatis; apertura circulari, labro (in hoc specimine) simplici; fulvescente-spadicea, infra castaneo plus minus tenue vittata.*

Lat. 1 poll.

Hab. Mauritius (found in the heights of Flacq, at the roots of a Bois-de-Natte tree).

Most nearly allied to *C. filosum*, but of lighter texture and warmer colour.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BRITISH EDRIOPHTHALMA.

To the Editors of the Annals of Natural History.

Plymouth, Dec. 16, 1857.

GENTLEMEN,—Further opportunities and more extended investigations compel me to make the following corrections in the Synopsis of the British Edriophthalma recently published in the Annals:—

1. Instead of adopting Dana's arrangement of the genus *Orchestia*, and making *Talitrus* a subgenus, it will be more in accordance with our present knowledge to divide *Talitrus* itself into two genera, as has been done by Nicolet and Stimpson, and thus adopt the genus *Orchestoidea* of the former (Gay's 'Chili'), which is synonymous with *Megalorchestia* of the latter (Proc. Nat. Hist. Society Boston, 'Crust. &c. Pacific Shores of North America').